News Archive - March 2005

3-31 Heritage Theatre Hopes to Add O'Neill To The Theatre's Name

The Heritage Theatre Company, which has earned the designation of a Potomac Stages Pick for their production of Eugene O'Neil's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* and impressed with its handling of O'Neill's short play *Hughie*, has set a goal of earning the name The Heritage-O'Neill Theatre Company to emphasize their specialty in O'Neill's works. Their current offering is O'Neill's follow-up to *Long Day's Journey*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. The company will include two plays by O'Neill in each season for the foreseeable future.

3-30 Woolly Sets First Full Season For 7th & D

As the Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company prepares to move in to their new home at 641 D Street NW, the lineup of shows for the 2005-06 season has been announced. After the final two shows of the current season (the comedy *Big Death and Little Death* and the bizarre *The Clean House*), the company will be offering four world premieres including an "inter-species musical." Here's the lineup:

- *The Faculty Room* by Bridget Carpenter
- *Starving* by S.M. Shephard-Massat
- *The Velvet Sky* by Roberto Aquirre-Sacasa
- *Steve & Idi* by David Grimm
- *Horse Opera*, music by Chris Jeffries, book and lyrics by Quincy Long

3-29 Smithsonian On Brando - "The Greatest Actor of All Time"

The Smithsonian Institution's Resident Associate's program will sponsor an afternoon session looking at the film and legitimate theater career of Marlon Brando which has the rather expansive title "The Greatest Actor of All Time." Leslie Jacobson, chair of George Washington University's Theater and Dance Department and film historian Max Alvarez present the two and a half hour program with film clips and examples of the influence of the actor who is said to have taken the Stanislavski "Method" from stage to screen. Brando only had five appearances on Broadway between 1944 and his departure for Hollywood in 1949, but his performance as Stanley Kowalski opposite Jessica Tandy, Kim Hunter and Karl Malden in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* is often cited as the moment styles in acting shifted to the modern internally motivated naturalistic approach seen in most dramatic works today. Admission is $28 and reservations can be made by calling 202-357-3030.

3-28 Shakespeare Theatre Takes Love's Labor's Lost To Stratford-upon-Avon

The 2005-06 season announcement for The Shakespeare Theatre includes one of Shakespeare's plays which will play not only in their 450-seat house on 7th Street NW, but the home of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon as well. *Love's Labor's Lost* will be directed by Michael Kahn as the final play in the company's five-play season in June and July of next year before transferring to the RSC's Theater Village in the birthplace of the Bard. The other plays to be produced during the season are *Othello*, *The Comedy of Errors*, Molière's *Don Juan*, and Eschylus' *The Persians*.

3-18 Potomac Stages Goes On Hiatus -- Next News March 28

Potomac Stages will be on hiatus until March 28. During this time there will be no new news or reviews on the Potomac Stages website and there will be no new issue of the free weekly email Potomac Stages Update. The issue of Potomac Stages Update which was sent out March 16 covered two weeks of openings and closings in order to avoid a gap in coverage. Check back here on March 28 for news and new reviews.

3-17 Smithsonian Offers Two Theater-Related Options for Saturday or Monday

The Smithsonian Associates program is sponsoring two courses in the next few days that may interest theatergoers. On Saturday Michael Parker will present a day long seminar on *The Golden Age of Operetta* which will survey the evolution of the form from its earliest days starting with *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) and moving on through the Savoy operas, the romantic traditions of Herbert and Lehar to the work of Friml and Romberg. General admission for the session is $130. On Monday evening a multiple date program begins titled *Behind the Scenes at the Shakespeare Theatre: The Making of The Tempest*. It includes a discussion with the artistic team of the Shakespeare Theatre's latest production on Monday followed by a backstage tour on April 4, a session analyzing the play on April 11, attendance at a performance on the 12th and a post-play discussion on April 18. General admission is $132. Registration for Smithsonian Associate programs may be made by phone during regular business hours at 202-357-3030.

3-16 Hathaway and Levine's Just Theater Covers Columbinus, You Never Can Tell and The Goat

The March edition of the Montgomery Community Television program **Just Theater** featuring Potomac Stages' Brad Hathaway and Channel 21's Faiga Levine will air three times a week beginning tonight for the next three weeks. The program will be telecast on Channel 21 on Wednesdays at 8 pm, Fridays at 4:30 pm and Sundays at 9 pm. The topics of conversation this month are Round House Theatre's premiere of *Columbinus* which is playing at their Silver Spring facility, the Washington Stage Guild's *You Never Can Tell* and the Arena Theatre production of Edward Albee's *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*.

3-15 Zelda Returns To Direct At Arena

Arena Stage's 2005-06 season will include a play directed by founder Zelda Fichandler. For her first production here in ten years, Fichandler will direct Clifford Odett's portrait of a Jewish family in depression-era New York, *Awake and Sing!* Other highlights of the season include Matt Bogart's return to star in the musical *Damn Yankees* which Molly Smith will direct, a new play by Charles Randolph-Wright and a revival of N. Richard Nash's *The Rainmaker*. Click here to see the entire season.

3-14 Aguirre-Sacasa's Latest Gets New York Premiere

The newest play by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, *Golden Age,* will premiere at the Kraine Theater in New York's Greenwich Village. Aguirre-Sacasa's *The Muckle Man* earned a Charles MacArthur Award nomination for outstanding new play in the 2002 Helen Hayes Awards cycle, his *Dark Matters* premiered at Source Theatre on 14th Street in 2003, and *Mystery Plays* received a reading at Arena Stage. *Golden Age* is described as a "comic book fantasia that journeys through time and space, chronicling the life and times of freckled, red headed Archie-esque everyman." The production is scheduled to run from March 29 through April 22.

3-11 Two Free Readings Of Interest

Free readings are being offered by Woolly Mammoth at the Touchstone Gallery at 1 o'clock Saturday afternoon and by the Actors' Center at the Rosslyn Spectrum at 8 o'clock on Monday night. Woolly's "Playground, Second Saturdays" series of free readings is offering two one act plays, Otho Eskin's *The Thing of it Is* and Lisa Voss' *Ladykiller*. The Touchstone Gallery is at 406 7th Street, NW. The Monday evening reading at the Spectrum is of Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman's 1936 play *Stage Door*.

3-10 Helen Hayes Awards Organization Issues Annual Report

For the first time in its over twenty-year history, the Helen Hayes Awards organization has issued a formal end-of-year annual report covering its programs (the awards, the Washington Theatre Legacy Project, the Audience Development Initiative, the Canadian/Washington Theatre Partnership, and its information programs). The report offers a glimpse into the future with information on planned initiatives including the Washington Theatre Radio Report, a toll free theater information line, a gift certificate program and others. The report includes the statistical information on the 2004 season that would have been reported from the podium of the annual awards nomination ceremony at the Canadian Embassy

two weeks ago had that event not been snowed out. Highlights of the statistics include:

- The Washington area has 80 professional theaters.
- Of these, 65 presented a total of 383 productions.
- They ran for a total of 7,582 performances.
- There were 2,133,731 audience members for these performances.

Copies of the report will be mailed to anyone calling 202-337-4572.

3-9 UVA Sets Shakespeare Session for Summer on the Lawn

The University of Virginia's School of Continuing and Professional Studies has scheduled a five day program "William Shakespeare: Wild and Whirling Words" as its Summer on the Lawn seminar June 22 - 26. Not only do participants get a full schedule of Shakespeare-related events, they have the option of residing in Mr. Jefferson's Academical Village, the rooms bordering the lawn which he designed and had built after he retired from the Presidency and established the University. The program includes an opening reception and dinner in the Rotunda, performances at Shenandoah Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton and presentations by Ralph Alan Cohen, executive director of Shenandoah Shakespeare's American Shakespeare Center, combat choreographer J.P. Scheidler, Kate Burke of the University's Drama Department and actress Kate Norris. For further information, log on to www.uvaseminars.org.

3-8 And The Ushers' Monthly Favorite Show Award Goes To . . . Romeo and Juliet

The theater enthusiasts who usher in the theaters in the Potomac Region, and who participate in the Ushers' Favorite Show Award program sponsored by Potomac Stages, have named the Folger Theatre's production of *Romeo and Juliet* as their favorite show for the month of February, 2005. The production, directed by PJ Paparelli, ran through February 27. This is the first time a production of the Folger Theatre has been selected by the Ushers for the award. The selection makes *Romeo and Juliet* eligible, along with those selected for each of the months of 2005, for the annual "Ushers' Favorite Show of the Year" award to be announced next year. If you usher at local theaters and would be interested in participating in the Ushers' Favorite Show Award program, click here to learn how to sign up.

3-7 Vienna Theatre Company's Evita Walks Away With Seven WATCH Awards

Thirty-one Washington Area Theatre Community Honors Awards were presented last night at the annual gala honoring outstanding achievement in the Potomac Region's community theaters at the Birchmere in Alexandria. The Vienna Theatre Company's production of the Tim Rice, Andrew Lloyd-Webber musical *Evita* dominated with seven awards including sharing both the Outstanding Direction of a Musical and the Outstanding Musical awards in ties with the Little Theatre of Alexandria production of Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*. The Little Theatre of Alexandria had a total of six awards, three for *Cabaret,* two for *Over the River and Through The Woods* and one for *Sleuth*. Four other companies had three awards each, Elden Street Players (for *Copenhagen* and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*,) Fauquier Community Theatre (for *Hello, Dolly!* and *The Wiz*,) the Providence Players of Fairfax (*The Man Who Came to Dinner*) and the Silver Spring Stage (*Bedroom Farce* which was named Outstanding Play.) Click here to see all the winners.

3-4 WATCH Awards To Be Announced At Gala Ceremony On Sunday

The Washington Area Theatre Community Honors (WATCH) awards, which recognize quality work in the 25 community theaters which participate from throughout the Potomac Region, will hold its annual gala awards ceremony this Sunday at the Birchmere in Alexandria. Winners in 28 categories will be announced. Click here to see the nominees and check back here on Monday to see the winners.

3-3 Baranski, Schaeffer, Synetic, Wicked & New Theatre All Featured In Kennedy Center's 2005-06 Season Announcement

The Kennedy Center's announcement of their 2005-06 season includes a number of important additions to theatergoers schedules for the next year or so. Most notable, perhaps, is the fact that Eric Schaeffer of Signature Theatre will direct a revival of Jerry Herman's musical *Mame* starring Christine Baranski in the Eisenhower Theater, February 18 to March 26, 2006. Paata and Irina Tsikurishvili of Synetic Theatre will premiere their new work, *Dracula*, in the Terrace Theater, September 8 - 11, 2005, during the Center's Prelude Festival. Other big news for fans of musicals include the national touring companies of two current Broadway shows coming to the Opera House, *Wicked* from December 21, 2005 to

January 15, 2006 and *Little Women*, June 27 - July 23, 2006. The theater season will also include a Kennedy Center production of *The Subject was Roses*, January 7 - 29 and another visit from the Royal Shakespeare Company, April 11 - May 7, 2006. The Center's Fund for New American Plays co-produces with Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company a play by Don DeLillo, *Love-Lies-Bleeding*, which will play June 17 - 25, 2006 in the Terrace Theater. The Center's family performance program will have four world premiere, Center-commissioned pieces in the new Family Theater in the space that used to be the Film Theater. It will open this December with *Alice* based on a children's book by Whoopi Goldberg. Then, next year, the Family Theater will host premieres of *Brave No World* (January) *Citizen 13559: The Journal of Ben Uchida* (March) and *Walking the Winds: Arabian Tales* (April.)

3-2 Embassy of Czech Republic Offers Screening of Joan of Arc Film Tonight

Theatergoers feeling a need for a briefing on the history of Joan of Arc before attending Olney Theatre Center's production of George Bernard Shaw's famous drama about the Maid of Orleans might consider attending tonight's free screening of "Joan of Arc: Child of War, Soldier of God" which is slated to premiere on the Hallmark TV Channel on March 21. The film is based on her testimony in the trials which led to her burning at the stake in 1431. The screening at 7 pm is free, reservations may be made by calling 202-274-9100 extension 3413. The Czech Embassy is located at 3900 Spring of Freedom St., NW between Connecticut Avenue and Rock Creek Parkway.

3-1 Kennedy Center, Signature, Shakespeare Theatre, Arena and Theater Alliance Lead Hayes Award Nominations

The snow forced cancellation of the formal nomination ceremony at the Canadian Embassy last night, but the Helen Hayes Awards office released the nominations anyway. Work in 55 of the 187 eligible professional shows in the Washington metropolitan area earned nominations in 23 categories. Among the theaters with the highest number of nominations were The Kennedy Center (18) Signature Theatre (15) The Shakespeare Theatre (14) Arena Stage and Theater Alliance (both at 10.) Toby's Dinner Theatre pulled seven while those with six were Studio Theatre, True Colors Theatre Company and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company who also had one jointly with Theatre J. The National Theater and Folger each had five. Among the shows earning the most nominations were Signature Theatre's *Allegro* and the Kennedy Center's *The Producers* with 7 nominations each, The Shakespeare Theatre's *Cyrano*, Arena Stage's *Señor Discretion Himself*, True Colors Theatre Company's *Tambourines to Glory* each with 6 and Toby's Dinner Theatre's *Godspell*, National Theatre's *Movin' Out* and the Shakespeare Theatre's *Pericles* with 5 each. Four nominations went to work in Open Circle Theatre's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the Kennedy Center's *On Golden Pond* and Folger Theatre's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Multiple nominations for individuals included three for music director Jon Kalbfleisch for work at Signature Theatre's *Allegro*, *Ellegies, a Song Cycle* and *The Highest Yellow*. Double nods went to playwright Craig Wright whose plays *Melissa Arctic* and *Grace* were both nominated for the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play, Dan Covey for lighting for both *Mary's Wedding* at Theatre Alliance and *Merlin and the Cave of Dreams* at Imagination Stage, Eric Schaeffer for direction of both *Allegro* and *One Red Flower* at his Signature Theatre, Irina Tsikurishvili for choreography for both *The Crackpots* at Synetic Theatre and *The Master and Margarita* at Synetic/Classika, Martin Desjardins for sound design for *Macbeth* at the Shakespeare Theatre and *The Diary of Anne Frank* at the Round House. Tim Mitchell's lighting for *Henry IV* drew one nomination for Part 1 and another for Part 2. Two actresses pulled multiple nominations. Jennefer Mendenhall was nominated for outstanding lead actress in a play for *Grace* and for outstanding supporting actress in *Lenny & Lou*, both at Woolly Mammoth Theatre, while Tracy Lynn Olivera was nominated for outstanding supporting actress in *Carousel* at Olney Theatre Center and *Allegro* at Signature Theatre. Thirty-one of the fifty-five nominated shows had been designated as a Potomac Stages Pick and seven of the thirteen recipients of the monthly Ushers Favorite Show Awards had at least one Helen Hayes Award nomination. Click here to see the entire list of nominees.

Click here for the news archive for February